

ROSE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION NEWS



P.O. Box 1419, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND 02840

SPRING, 1997 NUMBER 23

APRIL
FOOL
JOKE IS
ON ALL
OF US!



The April Fool's Day storm really got us, but before too many flakes had fallen we decided that May Day would be a perfect time to hold our April Fool's Day party. We hope everyone can make the new date for this fun family event which will be held Thursday, May 1 from 6-9 PM, but this time at Trinity Church, as in the past.

Our theme is "FOOL'S GOLD" so we can be very foolish and play with gold words, like goldfish and gold coins and golden retrievers. Warren Gray will be in his clown costume fooling around with his magic tricks and balloons for the kids, there will be prizes (and some surprises) for everyone, and we will dance to "Golden Oldies" provided by Kathy and Paul Giammarco after dinner.

Tickets are \$10 for members and \$12 for the public in advance, \$2 more if purchased at the door. \$35 family maximum. Please call the office and make your reservations before April 28 so we can have enough for everyone. (Yes, we now take credit cards!)

Rose Island's Maritime Nesting Birds

Richard L. Ferren & James E. Myers



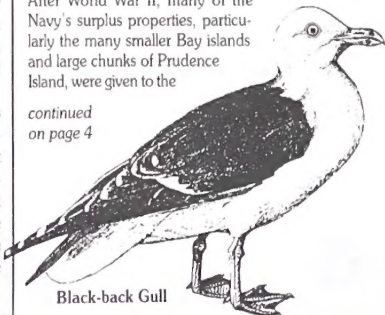
Terns

Rhode Island is called the "Ocean State" because it has one of the longest coastlines of any state in proportion to its land mass. Associated with Narragansett Bay and the coastline are many islands, ranging in size from Aquidneck, Conanicut and Prudence to tiny rocks and islets smaller than an automobile. Many of these islands and rocks serve as breeding sites for a specialized group of marine birds that nest in large numbers close together in isolated places so that the birds may reduce their vulnerability to such common terrestrial predators as raccoons, skunks, weasels, foxes, and opossums, as well as humans.

Together, the islands, rocky islets, sand bars and mainland beaches have always been critical to the survival and continued presence of various colonial nesting birds. In recent decades, "old standards" among marine birds such as the Black-crowned Night-Heron and Common Tern have been joined by a number of others that were never previously known to nest in the state. This increase in diversity has occurred despite Rhode Island's growing urbanity, and the smallest state has gradually become host to many colorful and graceful species that were rare even a half century ago.

In the early Colonial period, some and perhaps most of the smaller or least populated islands were soon utilized as safe places for keeping farm animals because stock could free range without fencing. The most attractive early aspect of the islands, however, was the freedom from predation they afforded, particularly from wolves that even harassed the flocks on Aquidneck Island. With the rise of maritime trade, islands that contained lighthouses were grazed by the lighthouse keepers' animals, including cows, goats and chickens. Later islands such as Rose, Dutch, Hope, Big Gould were occupied by the War Department for defense purposes. After World War II, many of the Navy's surplus properties, particularly the many smaller Bay islands and large chunks of Prudence Island, were given to the

continued
on page 4



Black-back Gull

About the authors: Dick Ferren is a Professor of Life Sciences at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Jim Myers is the Principal Wildlife Biologist with the R.I. Division of Fish and Wildlife in West Kingston, Rhode Island. In 1976 they began surveying the maritime birds of Rhode Island. This article on Rose Island's birds is an excerpt from their manuscript. It underscores the importance of Rose Island to the ecology of the whole Bay.



ROSE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION NEWS
SPRING ISSUE, 1997 NUMBER 23

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ROSE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION NEWS
Spring, 1997 Number 23

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Telephone 401-847-4242 FAX 401-849-3540

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Time to Reunite Our Bonds

The coming of Spring is met with more enthusiasm than any other season. Each year our bodies and souls struggle through winter seeking the eternal refreshment the spring season brings us. Spring is a time we reunite our bonds with the great outdoors. Hiking, biking, birding or kayaking, we are inspired to enjoy active and passive recreation within our physical environment.

Reflecting on the season's change reminds me that this is perhaps the best time for all of us to "bond" with Rose Island and all the insular dimensions it offers. As you begin your celebration of spring be sure that you include Rose Island Lighthouse in your migration to the outdoors. The Island's bushes and beaches are already bursting with birds returning to nest at their summer resort homes, while the seals are getting ready to return to Maine to have their pups.

There are so many ways to enjoy this wonderful spot, whether through a bird watching tour to the Lighthouse, or by reading about the maritime nesting birds in our feature article by Dick Ferren and Jim Myers. From the top of the Lighthouse to the low tide mark on the beach, Rose Island offers a very special world to learn about, respect and explore.

This issue of our Newsletter is full of interesting updates about Rose Island and the projects and programs that keep us moving. I want to thank all our members and supporters for your commitment to all our environmental and educational goals. Together we can continue to make a difference in the world.

Geraldine R. Pilkington

Geraldine R. Pilkington, President

**LIGHTHOUSE SKILLS
WEATHER CONTEST**



The April Fool's Day storm makes us wonder how good we are at predicting the weather? Last summer was wet. What do you think will happen this summer? Here is your chance to win two Clambake tickets or Lighthouse family tour tickets.

Send us your guess of how much rain is measured with the NOAA manual gauge between 8:00 AM June 1 and 8:00 AM June 30, 1997. Include your name, address, phone number and the amount of rain in inches and tenths (example: 1.3 inches). Entries must be postmarked by May 31. Winners will be announced at our Clambake on July 19.

JAMESTOWN NEWPORT FERRY



SCHEDULE FOR ROSE ISLAND

From July 16 to Labor Day Weekend you can board the little red Jamestown-Newport Ferry at Bowen's Wharf or at the Viking Tour dock at Goat Island and request a stop at Rose Island.

Leave James.	Rose Island Request	Bowen's Wharf	Goat Island	Rose Island Request	Arrive James.
-	-	9:30AM	9:45	10:00	10:15
10:30AM	10:45	11:00	11:15	11:30	11:45
NOON	12:15	12:30	12:45	1:00	1:15
1:30PM	1:45	2:00	2:15	2:30	2:45
3:00PM	3:15	3:30	3:45	4:00	4:15
4:30PM	4:45	5:00	5:15	-	-

Round trip fare is \$12 per adult, \$6 for children if you pay on the boat. The Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation will sell commuter tickets to its members and overnight guests for \$10 round trip, however, commuter tickets must be purchased in advance. Please call the office at 401-847-4242 for details.

Admission to the Lighthouse is free to members. A \$1.00 donation is requested of others. Riding the ferry is a great way to see what's going on, in and around Jamestown, Fort Adams and Newport Harbor, too! So ride the Jamestown-Newport Ferry!

At the Seamen's Church Institute's "Night of Camaraderie" on March 22, **Charlotte Johnson** was recognized for having completed Northeast Maritime Institute's captain training course and passing the USCG written exam, which she did with flying colors in 6 hours. Now she is a licensed "Master of inland auxiliary sail vessels of not more than 50 gross tons." She was presented a neat captain's coffee mug specially monogrammed by Signatures. Congratulations Captain Charlotte! The next step is to save all the fares she collects for the day we have to buy a new boat.



Many people have said how great it was to see the Lighthouse on cable TV recently! Actually, the program is a **Crossed Paths** episode filmed by our friends **Bob Poniatowski** and **Charlie Berluti** and it is available on video at our gift shop for \$20. We've also given copies to the local libraries so people can learn more about how the lighthouse works as a fun environmental education center.

Although we only offer the kind of dining out you bring along with you to the Lighthouse, we were pleased to be featured recently on the cover of the **AAA Dining Guide** for South Central New England.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 1 TO JULY 15

Bird Nesting Season - Public access limited. Do not walk on the beaches around the island or beach any boats. Use only the Lighthouse landing. Special accommodations for school groups, bird-watching tours and overnight guests. (Call for reservations)

MONDAY, APRIL 21

7:00 PM - Learn and Explore Lecture Series - Doubletree Hotel

RHODE ISLAND'S BREEDING

MARINE BIRDS - Richard Ferren

Consider the history of the Ocean State from a bird's perspective! Rhode Island has only recently been adopted as a summer home by a variety of marine birds, such as Herons, Egrets, Oystercatchers, Double-crested Cormorants and Glossy

Ibis. What makes R.I. so attractive to marine birds, and how can future management decisions protect their habitats? (\$300 public, members free)

THURSDAY, MAY 1

6:00-9:00 PM - Trinity Church (Postponed from April 1) "Fool's Gold" - April Fool's Day Spaghetti Dinner fun raiser. Fun for the whole family with Warren the magic clown, prizes for everyone and dancing to "golden oldies" (\$35 family maximum. Make reservations by April 28.)

THURSDAY, MAY 15

7:00 PM - Learn and Explore Lecture Series - Doubletree Hotel
HURRICANE—THE GREATEST STORM ON EARTH - David R. Vallee, NOAA National Weather Service

Here's the inside story on hurricanes! Learn about the anatomy of hurricanes, how they form, how they are named, and how their strength and path are predicted. Learn about the destructive forces at work in hurricanes and how to track and prepare for them. (\$300 public, members free)

JULY 16 TO LABOR DAY

Public Tours. The Lighthouse is open 10:00 am - 4:00 pm daily when guides are on site. Round trip fare on Jamestown-Newport Ferry is \$12/person (\$6 child), plus landing fee of \$1/person at Rose Island. (No landing fee for members or people with overnight reservations.)

SATURDAY, JULY 19

Native American Clambake
Held rain or shine at the Rose Island Lighthouse. Reservations required.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 7

Annual Meeting
With "Mr. Lighthouse" Wayne Wheeler, President of the U.S. Lighthouse Society.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Third Annual We Rows for Rose Regatta Row or paddle your small boat to benefit the Lighthouse. Entry Fee.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, OCT 11-12

Columbus Day Home Tours
See such exclusive waterfront homes as Clingstone, Beacon Rock, the Robinson House and The Castle at Hammersmith Farm. Member discount on tickets. Reservations required.

For More Information and reservations call: 401-847-4242

state in and around 1973. Available at the proper moment, they have provided a new-found archipelago of tailor-made and little-disturbed sites for maritime breeding birds. Many of the newly arrived species, particularly the southern herons, were pushing into southern New England just as these islands were being supplanted by the Navy.

The maritime nesting birds of our coast can be conveniently divided into northern and southern contingents, since these are the directions from which their increasing populations approached southern New England after the era of physical exploitation in the last century gave way to protection. One group, including the Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, and Double-crested Cormorant, have reached R.I. at varying speeds from the north, while another group including Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis, and American Oystercatcher, has pushed northward along the coast in recent times from the South. Only in recent years have these northern and southern avifaunas come together on the breeding islands of the Northeast, quite likely, or in most cases, for the first time in centuries.

The two groups have many common attributes, most particularly their ties to coastal ecology, their need for insular nesting locations, and their universal recovery from unlimited shooting and eggging that reached a nationwide peak in the era 1865-1920. They often differ, however, in their habitat preferences, not only among the several species in terms of their feeding requirements, but as groups concerning the vegetation (or lack thereof) that they require (or can tolerate) in the vicinity of their nest sites.

While the intrinsic vegetational character and other qualities of these islands have influenced and continue to influence the numbers and composition of avian populations that use them, a reversal in these influences also occurs in which the birds themselves influence the character of their island habitat. Through their excrement, these fish-eating birds are capable of markedly changing the vegetative and even geological characteristics of the breeding islands through acidification and consequent loss of vegetation and soil. The vegetative changes in the nesting islands then influence the composition of avian breeders from one year to the next, amounting to a succession in the nesting birdlife that was set in motion by the birds themselves.

Long since grown up to a tangle of vegetation, Rose Island and Dyer Island are among the most valuable and vulnerable of Bay islands still largely in private hands. Rose Island is divided into a 1.5 acre lot on the southwest corner associated with the Lighthouse, which is owned by the City of Newport, and an approximately 15.5 acre parcel formerly owned by the Navy and now owned by CMTS and the Atlantic Investment Corp.

At the beginnings of the survey in 1977, there were only a few trees and only a small area of significant underbrush, but by the

early 1990s a vast regrowth of brush and increased size of the several clumps of trees (mostly introduced English oak) had created sufficient nesting habitat for several herons and Glossy Ibis. The environment also supports the Garter Snake, Smooth Green Snake and Northern Brown Snake but no mammals.

Approximately 150 pairs of Herring Gulls were breeding here in 1972 when the island was first investigated, suggesting that

colonization may have occurred sometime after 1961. In the 20 years from 1976 and 1996, between 280-700 pairs of Herring Gulls and between 4-85 pairs of Great Black-backed Gulls were nesting on the island. Considerable fluctuations are evident, but a general theme, as on other islands, is a decline in Herring Gulls and an increase in Black-backs. With an increase in the height and density of the vegetation during the survey, Herring Gulls have declined in the vegetated center of the

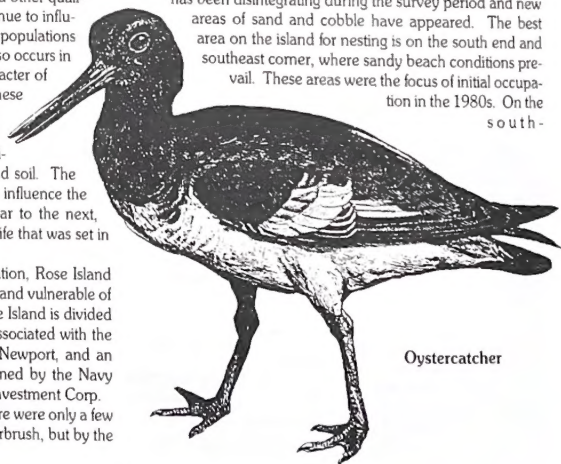
island, but numbers around the periphery have remained constant or slightly increased. Great Black-backed Gulls have risen from only a few pairs near the dock and around the southeast end to many pairs that now circle the periphery of the island.

The American Oystercatcher came to Rose Island in 1982, apparently temporarily, because the pair seen in early June did not remain. In 1985, a pair finally remained on Rose for the season. Since then at least one pair has occupied the island except in 1994, when none were present. In three years since 1989, two pairs were present. An initial obstacle to use of this island by Oystercatchers appeared to be a retaining wall on the east side, which came down nearly to the water at high tide and prevented development of a normal beach. Fortunately this wall

has been disintegrating during the survey period and new areas of sand and cobble have appeared. The best area on the island for nesting is on the south end and southeast corner, where sandy beach conditions prevail. These areas were the focus of initial occupation in the 1980s. On the

south-

Long since grown up to a tangle of vegetation, Rose Island and Dyer Island are among the most valuable and vulnerable of Bay islands still largely in private hands.



Oystercatcher



west corner of the island, however, the Lighthouse was undergoing renovations in the late 1980s and a dock was built from the beach nearby. The subsequent increased human traffic at the southwest corner of the island, forced the Oystercatchers to take up territories more often on the east and northwest sides.

Up to 1990 there was no development of a heronry on Rose Island, undoubtedly in part because the island lacked enough dense thickets and sizable trees. In that year, however, a report of Glossy Ibis entering thick vegetation was followed up, and a new colony of 10 pairs of Black-crowned Night-Herons and one pair of Glossy Ibis was found. Except for this first year, this colony has been consistently dominated by Glossy Ibises, which makes it the only island in Rhode Island where Glossy Ibis have exceeded Black-crowned Night-Heron for more than one year.

Other species were gradually attracted, including Snowy Egrets beginning in 1991 and Great Egrets the same year. Most of the herons have been generally increasing, with as many as 30 nests of Snowy Egret and 22 of Great Egret. The latter, which often prefer high trees on other islands, were tending to nest lower on Rose Island due to the scattered nature of the higher trees and the focus of the colony in thickets of arrowwood in the center of the island. One nest of Great Egrets in 1995 was no more than three feet from the ground. As on other islands, Little Blue Herons have been minority species, with no more than 4 pairs. As of this writing, Cattle Egrets, a minority species in all the colonies since the 1970s, has yet to be seen on Rose Island.

Times had changed from the mid-1980s, when there was inadequate vegetation for a heronry, to 1993 when the vegetation was so thick that difficulty was beginning to be experienced in investigating nests. So far, the best year for herons was 1996, while Glossy Ibis peaked in 1992 with 112 nests. By 1996 this heronry had a short history of six years. In keeping with the transitory nature of such mixed colonies and a 10-12 year tenure of occupancy on other islands, Rose Island might expect an exodus of colonial waders sometime in the period 2000-2004. If the level of human disturbance remains relatively unchanged, the return of a heronry could be expected after several years.

Rose Island, more than any other location in Rhode Island, has been a magnet for nesting members of the feral population of Canada Goose. Nest counts peaked with 16 nests in 1981 and 22 nests in 1984. Other nesting aquatic birds breed from time to time, including Mallards and American Black Ducks. A



Nesting Season Alert

During the critical bird nesting time from April 1 to July 15 access to Rose Island is limited. During this

period only small groups, school tours and overnight visitors to the Lighthouse are allowed.

No boats are to be beached during this period. Please land only at the Lighthouse dock. To limit disruption to the nesting bird population, and for your own safety, please respect these dates!

Public Tours are offered beginning July 16 through Labor Day, when the Lighthouse will be open daily from 10 am to 4 pm. Scheduled transportation via the Jamestown-Newport Ferry costs \$12 round trip. Some interruptions in the schedule are expected during festival weekends. Starting this year we are charging a \$1 landing fee at Rose Island — free to RILF members.

Spotted Sandpiper was flushed from a suspected nest in 1979 and another seen in 1984, but none have been seen since. Landbirds nesting on the island since the 1970s included several pairs of Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, Song Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, and Gray Catbirds. The island attracted singing male Carolina Wrens in 1985 and 1991. By 1996, smaller numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds were evident parallel with the massive regrowth of brush, while numbers of brush-inhabiting species such as catbirds had increased. A pair of Northern Cardinals were apparently nesting in 1996.

While no attempt is made to prioritize sites around the state based on their importance to colonial nesters, the larger accounts of the Bay islands may be singled out as among the most important in containing the greatest number or diversity of maritime breeders.

In summary, since the 1960s, despite a coastal zone ever-more crowded with humans, a surprising density and diversity of vulnerable island-nesting birds has invaded and built up sizable populations in Rhode Island due to an unlikely jumble of events. Most of the breeding places for maritime birds are now fortuitously ignored by a people long-since regulated away from shooting the harmless and largely unpalatable gulls, terns and fish-eating wading birds, and no longer needing their habitat for agriculture or military security. This neglect has quite accidentally allowed a state of nature to quietly return to many of Rhode Island's most isolated places. Their continuance deserves consideration in future policy decisions regarding coastal zone management.

END NOTE: Richard Ferren will be our featured speaker on April 21. See the calendar for details.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Our members, visitors and friends continually amaze us with gifts and loans for the Lighthouse and office. We needed old picture frames for our museum collection at the Lighthouse, for example. **Dean Aurecchia** donated a whole box of frames, as did **Milt Fullerton** (who also donated some binoculars) and **Carlyn & Neil Jansen** (who also came up with a meat grinder and a pretty, hand-cut lamp shade). **Susan Dunnington** donated the perfect pot rack and old spatula that were quickly put to use in the museum kitchen. We received a great photo from **Richard & Sue Turner** who stayed at the Lighthouse, and **Barbara French** has blessed us again by donating more cross stitch kits with our mottoes for our gift shop — "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without" and others.... and **Janice & Charles Wiseman** swapped a night at the Lighthouse for a large hooked rug with roses on it (what else?). **Dick Skinger** dropped off a futon chair/bed, and **Holly & Ed Pagliaro** presented us with a rug and a butcher block table and set of chairs when they came out on New Year's Day. The Seamen's Church Institute donated a wonderful old "Seafarer's Locker" for the museum, **Deanna Beck** gave us some more piano rolls (mostly German songs this time), and the Newport Yachting Center gave us two floats that will allow us to extend our landing 10 feet into deeper water if we get CRMC permission.

Our artist friends have been good to us, too. **Evelyn Rhodes** gave us a sweet little hand colored etching of the Lighthouse, and to commemorate **Dede Forker's** saying "Yes" in the Lighthouse tower, **John Philip Hagen** gave us a beautifully framed print which shows a woman (Dede) running down from the Lighthouse to meet a schooner. Very romantic. Congratulations, John, and thanks!

In the extended loan department, **Buzzy Mikkelsen** is allowing us to display some of his authentic lighthouse equipment, including a 35mm IOV lamp (IOV stands for incandescent oil vapor). For a kerosene lamp, it's quite a contraption. Buzzy has also loaned us some lighthouse equipment manuals of the era appropriate for the Rose Island Light. So we can display the lamp, Jon Heon is renovating a cabinet for us. By mid July, when our public tours begin and we have our clambake, the Lighthouse museum should be quite a sight to see, thanks to all our terrific helpers!

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A

This is our wish list. Spring cleaning time is here...if there's still some life left in that old whatever-you-have, please consider donating it to the Lighthouse. As always, all donations are tax-deductible. We're looking for...

- ★ Another full size (double) metal bed for our museum
Either iron, or brass if possible
- ★ Binoculars for school field trips
- ★ Paper cutter for the office
- ★ Bedside tables
- ★ Cedar chest or something similar in size

VOLUNTEER (or at-cost) SERVICES NEEDED for these projects: Are you a talented stripper? We're talking about furniture here. We have one large and two small cabinets that need to be stripped of old paint and refinished. If you are a sewer (that is, someone who does needlepoint and the like) or an upholsterer, we have a beautiful antique piano stool that needs new stuffing and recovering in, maybe, a ROSE pattern??? Also in the sewing department, we'd like to recycle our antique handmade quilts that are too worn to be used on the beds...any suggestions on how to repair them, or to recycle them by making the good sections into something else? We also have a large, hooked rug that needs to be cleaned, cut up and the pieces bound to make area rugs for the museum. This news will break the hearts of many...the player piano finally needs to be refurbished. Anyone who is, or who knows, a piano doctor who will do this work for love or for cheap is asked to call as soon as possible. We can't be without the piano for long.

In the office department, we're looking for someone who can come in once a week to file our photos, news clippings, visitor correspondence and possibly also write a column for this newsletter. A librarian or historian type background would be great, but enthusiasm and reliability are all that are required for this and most other jobs we have.

If you can be a guide or help with our clambake and "We Rows for Rose" regatta this summer, now is the time to sign up by calling Karen Benson. Members should also take this as the first notice to sign up for sitting an exclusive waterfront home during our Columbus Day Home Tour. The Robinson House, The Castle and Clingstone will be open again, along with some newcomers like Beacon Rock. Please call Karen at 401-847-2128.



EARLY BIRD MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The early bird catches the worm and also saves us the costs of further notices, so won't you consider helping us two ways by sending your membership dues today?

Definition of Basic Membership Categories:

\$10 Student - For persons under 18 years of age.

\$15 Senior - For persons over 65 years of age.

\$20 Individual - For one person.

\$35 Family - For one or two adults and their children or grandchildren under the age of 18 living at home.

\$50 and up - For businesses and super generous people of all ages.

Your Membership contribution in any category...

Allows you free admission to the beautifully restored Lighthouse.

Supports our environmental education programs for children & adults.

Keeps you informed of activities through our newsletter and notices.

Enables you to take discounts on most event tickets and merchandise.

Gets you a membership renewal notice early next spring.

Is fully tax-deductible in all categories.

Helps us maintain the Lighthouse and assures your role as a protector of the beautiful open space surrounding it.

Makes you proud to be a member every time you cross the Newport Bridge and see that beautiful Lighthouse down there!

We look forward to welcoming you aboard and seeing you and your guests at the Lighthouse and at our events!!

Please detach and mail the following form along with your payment to: "RILF" P.O. Box 1419, Newport, RI 02840-0997
Phone: 401-847-4242

— 1997-98 Membership Form —

Please include your current phone number and write 'same' if the following information matches your mailing label on the reverse side.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____
Street / P. O. Box City State Zip

CHECK APPROPRIATE BOXES:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Inspector | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Business |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Superintendent | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Assistant Keeper | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Associate Keeper |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Head Keeper | | |

ENCLOSED ARE:

- ☐ Annual dues in the category checked above \$ _____
☐ Additional sponsorship of ____ students @ \$10 \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

CALL ME TO HELP IN THESE AREAS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guide/Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Handyperson/Carpenter |
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PAYMENT: ☐ Check/Money Order ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX Signature: _____
Card No. _____ Exp. Date: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Please detach and mail with your payment to: RILF, P.O. Box 1419, Newport, RI 02840 Phone: 401-847-4242



ROSE ISLAND WEATHER REPORT

If you were in Newport on Saturday, March 29, you will no doubt remember the thunder storms that started in the afternoon and continued well into the night. It was an especially loud performance because the storm was so close. Our keepers **Brian and Maureen Burgess** and their guests, **Liz O'Connor and Kevin Burke**, who are pictured here certainly will remember it! On that Saturday we all learned the importance of the "lightening arrestors" — the capped, grounded poles that stand guard around each of the buildings that housed explosives to fill torpedoes during World War II.

Liz and Kevin were outside by the shed when at 1:00 PM the very first and biggest lightening bolt of the storm hit Rose Island. "It was LOUD. I was scared. It made our hair stand up on end, and we ran for cover back to the Lighthouse," said Liz afterwards.

The bolt hit the lightening arrestor closest to the wind tower and weather station. While the Bergey 1500 wind turbine appears not to be hurt at all, it did knock out one of the meters in the generator shed that shows how much electricity is being produced. Since we have back-up meters, it does not pose an immediate problem and will be fixed soon by **Henry DuPont** of Offshore Services on Block Island.



NEW FLAGS FOR OLD

Not wanting to throw out or burn our flags after they become tattered, we turn them instead into prizes for those keepers whose stay at the lighthouse is distinguished by having sustained the highest winds of the month over 50 mph. In addition to the thrill of being at the Lighthouse during a storm, the winners get the privilege of buying the Lighthouse a new flag. Our 1996 winners are:

January 19	62 mph Paddy Ginther & Rip Gerry
February 25	74 mph Pat & Gale Broderick
March 20	56 mph Charlotte Johnson
July 13	53 mph The Weatherbee Family
October 20	63 mph Beth Clarke & Friends



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NECESSARY
IF MAILED
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